

School Audit Executive Summary

Southern Leadership Academy

10/15/2006 – 10/20/2006

Bill Perkins, Principal

Introduction

The Kentucky Department of Education conducted a scholastic audit of Southern Leadership Academy during the period of 10/15/2006 - 10/20/2006. This school's last combined accountability index was 48.3 and its classification was Assistance Level 3. Here are the most relevant facts and next step recommendations from the audit.

School Deficiencies and Next Steps

1. Deficiency	Southern Leadership Academy has a Combined Accountability Index of 48.3 on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) and has been classified in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Tier 5 Consequences. School leadership has failed to provide an instructional program that ensures students an adequate and equitable instructional program that will lead them to proficiency by 2014.
Next Steps	School leadership should ensure that all instructional staff be provided effective professional development to modify instruction and assessment practices to meet the learning needs of their diverse student population. School leadership should ensure that learning styles are addressed and differentiated instruction is provided. School leadership should implement an ongoing student progress monitoring system. Teachers should collaborate to develop authentic assessments to determine the impact of the instructional practices on student achievement. High academic expectations should guide instructional decisions and practices. School leadership should ensure that professional development needs are tied to student achievement data, teachers' professional growth plans and teacher performance. Professional development should be embedded, ongoing and monitored for improving student achievement and the instructional practice of teachers.
Current Status of Progress	Deficiency #1 has been partially implemented. Some professional development has been offered to increase the use of effective and varied instructional strategies in order to meet the diverse needs of students. Because of the number of new/alternate certification teachers, professional development on learning styles, multiple intelligences and students' readiness levels should be given thoughtful consideration for 2008-09. There are too many teachers not following through with progress monitoring (Core Content Assessments). Many are not reviewing tests with students, and several are not giving these tests at all.

	<p>A few teachers are not submitting grades altogether.</p> <p>Leadership has not met with teams during their team meetings to ensure they are developing authentic assessments to determine the impact of the instructional practices on student achievement.</p> <p>One assistant principal created a committee for identifying students in need of interventions. Those students are now receiving extra help in the areas of math and reading at their specific grade level. Action is needed for the other two grades that have not yet been addressed.</p>
2. Deficiency	School leadership has failed to ensure a safe, orderly and equitable learning environment.
Next Steps	<p>School leadership should immediately begin a school-wide implementation of the adopted discipline and classroom management programs to ensure a safe, orderly and equitable learning environment for all students and staff. Disruptions during instructional time should be halted. Leadership should conduct classroom observations to identify staff who are not fully implementing behavior management procedures. Student behavior data should be collected, analyzed and the results used to drive interventions. Growth plans and corrective action planning should be completed on all staff needing assistance in behavioral management. School leadership and staff should be held accountable for demonstrating high academic expectations for all students. Teachers should accept their roles in student success and implement specific support strategies to meet the learning needs of all students. All leadership and staff should provide appropriate praise and positive reinforcement, motivating students to high levels of achievement.</p>
Current Status of Progress	<p>Deficiency #2 has been partially implemented.</p> <p>School leadership should develop a plan to address disruptive behavior to ensure that instructional time is maximized and protected. This plan should include refresher training in the adopted behavior management plan (CHAMPS).</p> <p>Too often behavior referrals are inconsistent among assistant principals. One assistant principal is perceived as having a hostile attitude toward students and adults, creating a negative climate in the building. Many times a call to security falls on deaf ears.</p> <p>The School Resource Officer (SRO) is not supervised by the principal; therefore, it is difficult to manage his actions.</p> <p>Having more than 20 KTIP/alternate certification teachers has not allowed for an equitable learning environment.</p> <p>The CHAMPS behavior management program has been adopted by the school; however, a very small number of teachers are using these strategies.</p> <p>Even though a hallway procedure was adopted by the principal, transitions are disorderly and unmanageable with too many students cutting class.</p>

3. Deficiency	School level leadership has failed to effectively demonstrate leadership skills in academic performance, learning environment and efficiency.
Next Steps	School leadership should fully implement the recommendations in this and prior scholastic audit reports. District level leadership should revisit the effectiveness and role of district office staff assigned to middle schools. District leadership should consider district interventions be coordinated and facilitated by the Priority School Manager to ensure continuous improvement. Through implementation follow-up, the recommendations from this document should be evaluated for impact on student achievement.
Current Status of Progress	<p>Deficiency #3 has been partially implemented.</p> <p>The school's Priority Manager has provided necessary and efficient oversight as well as guidance in the areas of leadership, curriculum, instruction, assessments, culture, and planning. She works directly with leadership in all areas and provides timely reports to the district and state.</p> <p>The district reassigned staff to the Coaching Team based on school needs; however, the school needs much more intensive help to meet its goal.</p>
4. Deficiency	School leadership has failed to ensure that the comprehensive improvement plan is grounded in a shared vision and mission for all students. The plan does not guide the decision making of the school.
Next Steps	School leadership should review and revise the current comprehensive school improvement plan. An implementation and impact system to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies and activities on student achievement should be used. All stakeholders should be involved in using the mission statement to establish a shared vision that supports high expectations for all students and all staff and drives the educational decisions of the school. The school's focus should shift first to "why students are underperforming" then to "which students are under performing."
Current Status of Progress	<p>Deficiency #4 has been partially implemented.</p> <p>The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) has completed two Impact and Implementation checks to date and has updated the 2008 comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP). The CSIP changes were completed by committee members and approved by the ILT. All stakeholders were involved.</p> <p>Continuing initiatives should not be the focus; rather, the school should determine what constitutes progress in these initiatives and develop strategies for continuous improvement. The mission for Southern is not posted (except in the principal's office) or discussed with faculty.</p> <p>The school is still working on establishing a shared vision that supports high expectations for all students and all staff and drives the educational decisions of the school. Many staff members are still making excuses for why students are not achieving at high levels.</p>

5. Deficiency	School leadership has failed to effectively respond to previous school Scholastic Audit Recommendations and Next Steps and previous school culture assessment results.
Next Steps	School leadership should ensure that school staff members are cognizant of the recommendations in this report. A plan for addressing these recommendations should be developed, implemented and monitored for impact on student achievement. School leadership should implement these recommendations through the support of the district's Priority School Managers.
Current Status of Progress	<p>Deficiency #5 has not yet been addressed.</p> <p>Spring 2007 staff analyzed audit findings. Due to the 2007/08 restructuring of SLA, 80% of the staff is new to the building; therefore, leadership has not discussed the contents of the audit report. HSE has shared her copy with several teachers.</p>
6. Deficiency	School leadership has failed to ensure that the school council is functional and in compliance with state statutes. The school council at Southern Leadership Academy is dysfunctional and disengaged from the management, operation and instructional purpose of the school.
Next Steps	The school and district should develop and include in their improvement plans a comprehensive set of action steps for improving the leadership function in the school. These steps should include activities to develop and deliver training, to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of leadership activities and to adjust as needed. School leadership should ensure its policies are understood and effectively implemented.
Current Status of Progress	<p>Deficiency #6 has not yet been addressed.</p> <p>Based upon the recommendations from the District's audit, the School-based Decision Making Council (SBDM) was removed. The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) has taken over the role of guiding the development and adoption of the comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP) and discussing systems and procedures.</p> <p>All hiring is being done by the principal and an interview committee.</p> <p>A new coaching team has been assigned to SLA and the Priority School Manager is focusing her work on Standard 7—Leadership. The Priority School Manager's monthly reports detail the monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the leadership at Southern Leadership Academy.</p> <p>The Comprehensive District Improvement Plan (CDIP) has a detailed plan for intentional collaboration between the school and district to help Southern plan for the new SBDM Council to begin its work effectively in the 2008-2009 school year. These plans should be implemented and monitored to ensure a strong foundation for the new Council.</p>

Conclusion

Student behavior in common areas and some classrooms continues to be problematic on particular teams and in specific areas. CHAMPS, the behavior management program, should be monitored for implementation to ensure consistency and safety throughout the building. Appropriate action should be taken by leadership to address staff members who are not effectively implementing the program. The school leadership needs to continue to collaborate with staff to examine solutions that address the loss of instructional time resulting from disruptive behavior. It is imperative that all staff model positive relationships with students/staff, particularly administrators. District and school leadership should monitor and ensure that school level leadership team members, including assistant principals and counselors, are effectively impacting student achievement.

School leadership should ensure:

- all students experience frequent assessments and get timely feedback from teachers;
- all teachers score, enter data, provide feedback, and modify instruction based on assessments;
- all teachers provide students with opportunities to reflect upon their own learning;
- all teachers collaboratively design assessment tasks and accompanying rubrics; and
- that student work is showcased and referenced during learning.

Leadership should establish a process that provides immediate, specific and constructive feedback to teachers related to classroom instructional practices and classroom management. The feedback from walkthrough observation should consistently focus on student learning needs, styles and multiple intelligences.

Southern Leadership has made improvements in the last several months; however, the work has just begun. At this point the vast majority of students will not be successful in high school. School and district leadership must be relentless in their demand for the best for the students at Southern Leadership Academy.